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ABSTRACT

Fingerplays--brief stories that rhyme and can be dramatized by using the fingers--are an old activity for children that can be traced in Indian lore to a time before Columbus. Today, fingerplays delight and fascinate young children and provide a variety of learning opportunities. Fingerplays can provide a source for strengthening language experiences for young children, such as opportunities for listening, speaking, discussing, reading, writing, and following directions. Extended learning activities also enrich language experiences. When selecting fingerplays and planning extended activities with fingerplays, adults should consider the developmental level of the children, the purpose of the fingerplay, the theme or unit of study, and the learning expectation. For presentation, fingerplays should be memorized. Making an illustrated chart to go with the rhyme can enhance reading experiences. Recorded fingerplays with accompanying illustrations at a listening station or learning center give children opportunities to participate with the fingerplay independently or in a group experience. This paper presents three fingerplays: "Apples"; "Five Brown Teddy Bears"; and "Butterflies." Each fingerplay includes instructions, the rhyme that accompanies the fingerplay, and several extended learning activities. The suggested activities provide a variety of learning opportunities that embrace field trips, dramatic play, games, motor activities, music, art, books, and stories. (TJQ)

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Strengthening Language Experiences for Children Through Fingerplays

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Strengthening Language Experience for Children Through Fingerplays

By
Betty Ruth Baker

Fingerplays are brief stories that rhyme and can be dramatized by the fingers. They are an old activity for children that can be traced to Indian lore before Columbus. Perhaps fingerplays are best identified with Froebel and the first kindergarten, but today they delight and fascinate young children and provide a variety of learning opportunities.

Fingerplays can provide a source for strengthening language experiences for young children. They present opportunities for listening, speaking, discussing, following direction, developing sentence structure, working with rhyming words and beginning sounds, cooperating with others, increasing attention span and becoming familiar with the printed word. Extended learning activities provide a variety of opportunities to enrich language experiences.

Selecting fingerplays and planning extended activities for fingerplays are important to providing an optimium learning experience. Consider the developmental level of the children, the purpose of the fingerplay, the theme or unit of study and the learning expectation when selecting a fingerplay. Prepare materials needed for the fingerplay and for the extended activities.

In presenting fingerplays it is necessary to become thoroughly familiar with the rhyme. Memorize the rhyme if possible or print on a card for easy use. It is helpful to make a chart with the rhyme including illustrations or to make a big book of rhymes. This can enhance reading experiences.

Record fingerplays and make illustrations for the listening station. Display illustrations and words on a bulletin board or at a special learning center. This gives children opportunities to participate with the fingerplay independently and in a group experience.

Fingerplays

The following fingerplays and extended activities provide opportunities to strengthen language experiences. Each rhyme can motivate learning, introduce concepts and enchance opportunities for listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Title: **Apples**

Five red apples in a basket by the door,
(Hold up hand)

(child's name) ate an apple, and now there are four.
(Fold down thumb)

Four red apples hanging on a tree,
(Hold up four fingers)

(child's name) ate an apple, and now there are three.
(Fold down first finger)

Three red apples just for you,
(Hold up three fingers)

(child's name) ate an apple, and now there are two.
(Fold down second finger)

Two red apples, oh what fun,
(Hold up two fingers)

(child's name) at an apple, and now there is one.
(Fold down third finger)

One red apple left, all alone.
(Hold up one finger)

I ate that apple and now they're all gone.
(Make fist.)

Activities:

- Bring five red apples to illustrate the fingerplay.

- Find out where apples grow. Visit an orchard, farmer's market or fruit stand if possible. Provide study prints and use the encyclopedia to learn how apples grow. Write a story about visit and how apples grow.

- Cut out a paper apple for each child. Write the child's name on an apple and keep the apples in a basket. Each day, place the apples on a table, and as the child arrives he can place his apple in the basket. This can encourage attendance, and at group time count the number of children at school. This can be used for roll call, grouping, transition and name recognition.

- Peel and cut apples into small pieces. Put pieces in a blender and turn on low speed to make apple sauce. Spoon in a paper cup for children to taste.

- Bobbing for apples is a traditional game and could be appropriate for older children. Bring a tub of water and float the apples. The children try to catch the apple with the mouth. This could be a game to demonstrate only and then eat the "bobbing apples." Make photographs of the children and write stories.

- Children can slice apples and serve with peanut butter for snacks or children can slice apples to mix with other fruits or vegetables for salads.

- Compare apples with other fruits. Suggest children classify fruits. Make apples cut outs of various colors and sizes for classification.

- Make interlocking puzzles by cutting apples from poster board. Print concept on the apple and laminate or cover with clear contact paper. Cut in interlocking pieces. Make puzzles for letters or numbers.

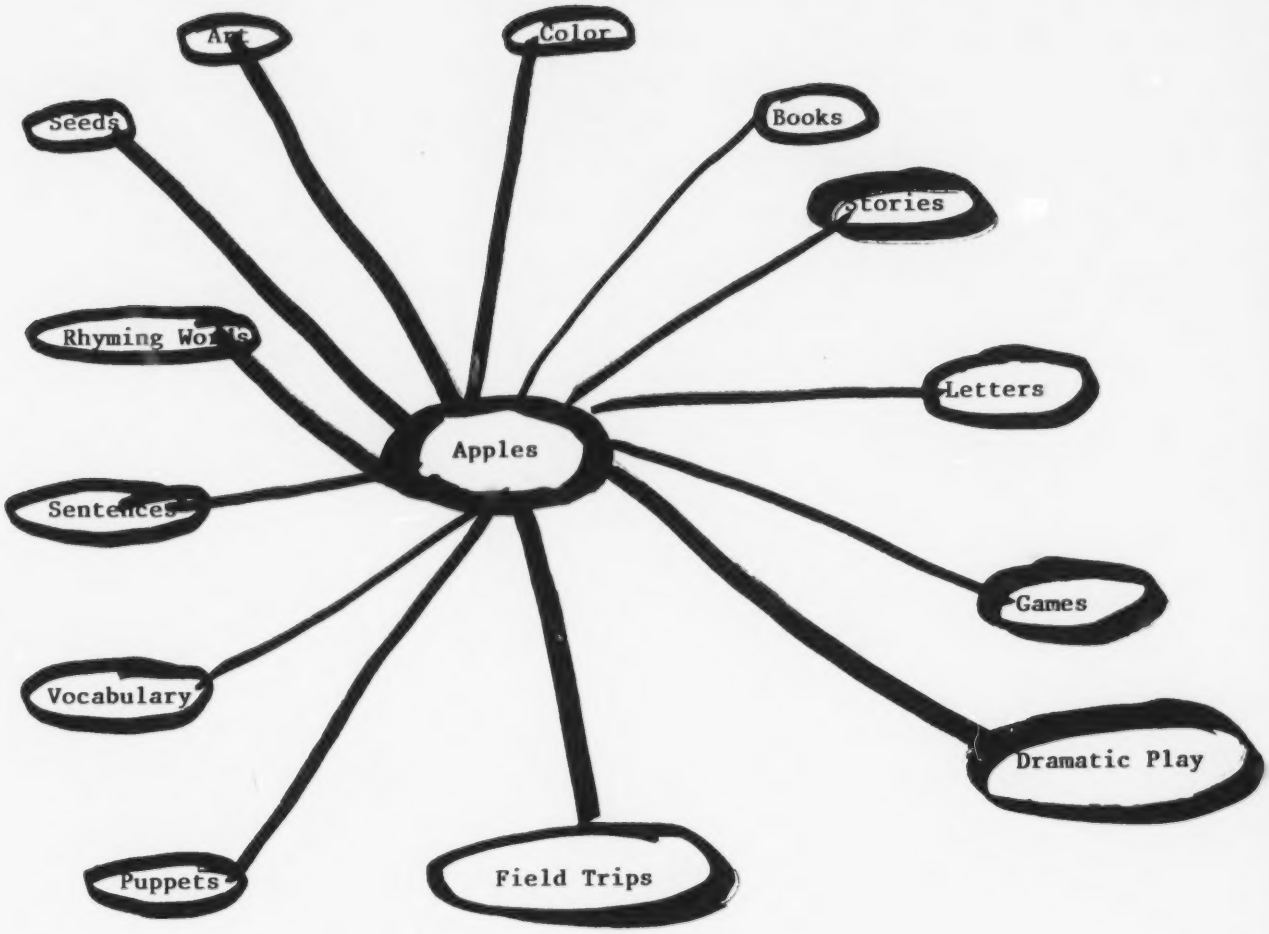
- Dramatize the rhyme by making finger puppets or making large apples from poster board and attaching heavy yarn on each corner for the child to wear around the neck as a body puppet.

- Cut out five apples from red construction paper or poster board. Glue each to a clothes pin. Clip all five apples on a plastic coat ranger. Remove one apple as the rhyme is said. Remember to use left to right eye movement.

- Look at the seeds in an apple. Look at the seeds under a magnifying glass. Compare the seeds with other seeds. Make a matching game including apple seeds, pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds and other.

- Encourage auditory skills by having children identify the rhyming words in the verse.

- At the supermarket identify different color apples(red, green, yellow). Buy different kinds and color apples. Ask the children to predict how each color or kind will taste. Make a chart of predictions. Cut and compare taste. Record the results.



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Title: **Five Brown Teddy Bears**

Five brown teddy bears ready to play.
(hold up right hand)
The first bear said, "Let's have a happy day."
(move thumb)
The second bear said, "I'm ready for some fun."
(move first finger)
The third bear said, "I can see the sun."
(move second finger)
The fourth bear said, "I will play with Mary."
(move third finger)
The fifth bear said, "I will play with Jerry."
(move fourth or little finger)
Five brown teddy bears ready to play.
(hold up right hand)
Five brown teddy bears ran away.
(place hand behind you) (repeat rhyme with left hand)

Activities:

- Make a display of teddy bears. Count the bears. Identify likenesses and differences in the bears. Write a story.

- Make a display of pictures of brown, black, grizzly, polar and panda bears.

- Write a story to establish fact and fantasy with the teddy bear, black, brown, grizzly, polar, and panda bears.

- Visit a toy store to see the different teddy bears. Look at the cost of each to develop concepts with money.

- Visit the zoo to observe the bears. Make a book about the visit by having each child draw a picture.

-Learn that bears hibernate in winter.

- For dramatic play, provide large cardboard boxes for children to use for the bear's den or cave.

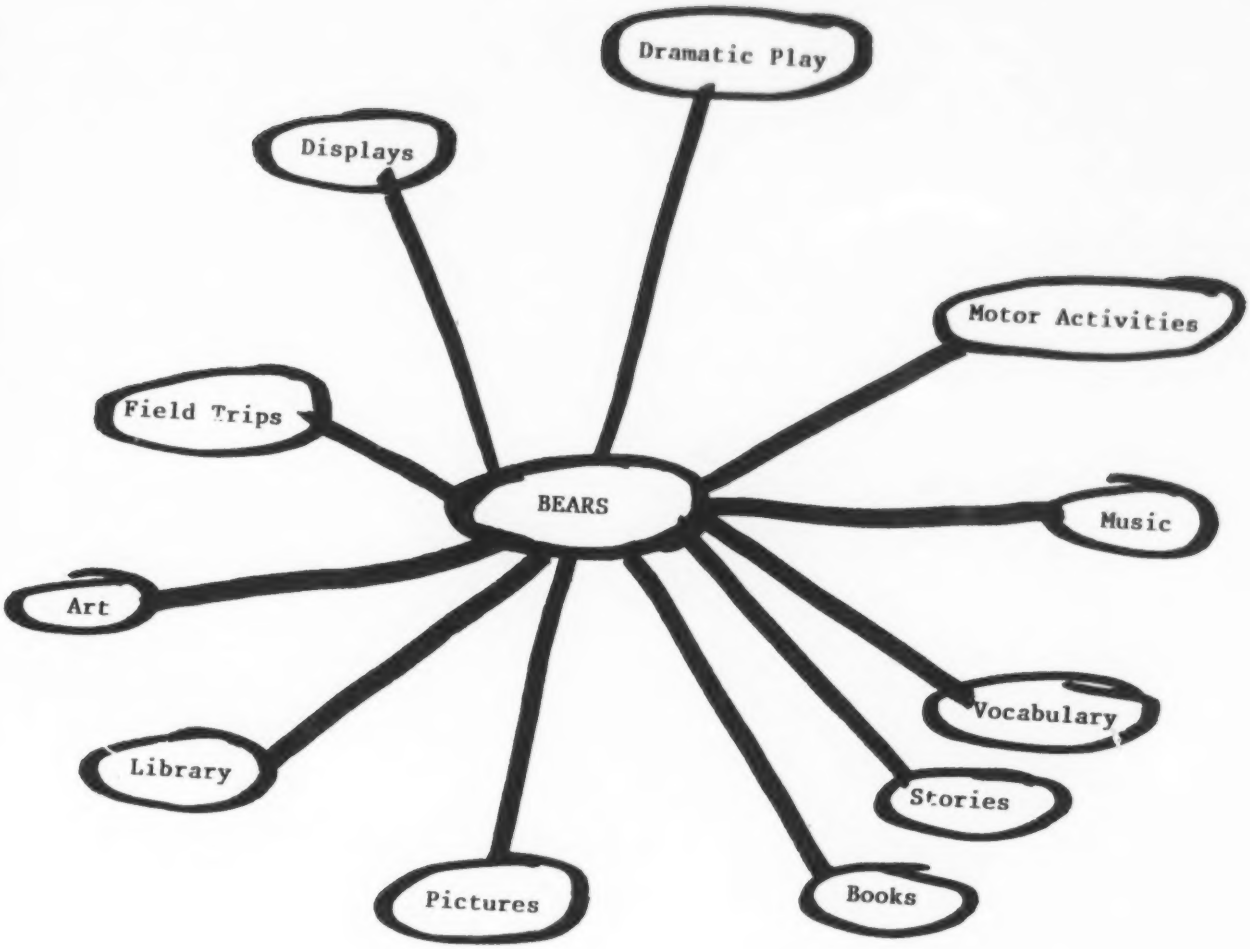
- Have a special day for teddy bear day. Encourage children to bring their teddy bears or other favorite toy. Provide a time for show and tell, and write an experience story.

- Make teddy bear cut outs for letter recognition and counting games.

- Make peanut butter playdough or cookie dough and have children cut with a cutter or mold teddy bear shapes for snacks.

- Read the story of The Three bears. Dramatize the story. Make comparisons of size with bears, bowls, chairs, beds.

- Read books about bears.
Example: Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?
Ask Mr. Bear
Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear?



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Butterflies

One yellow butterfly flying by you.
Here comes another,
and now there are two.

Two yellow butterflies yellow or can be.
Here comes another,
and now there are three.

Three yellow butterflies flying by the door.
Here comes another,
and now there are four.

Four yellow butterflies, fly, and dip and dive.
Here comes another,
and now there are five.

Five yellow butterflies flying in the sun.
They fly away,
and now there are none.

Activities:

- Illustrate the rhyme by making butterflies for the felt or magnetic board. (Use a pizza pan or a stove and counter top cover for a magnetic board)

- Read about butterflies in the encyclopedia.

- Illustrate the life cycle. make sequence cards.

- If possible bring a cocoon for the children to observe. Record the changes.

- Make a collection of pictures of butterflies.

- Move to music like butterflies.

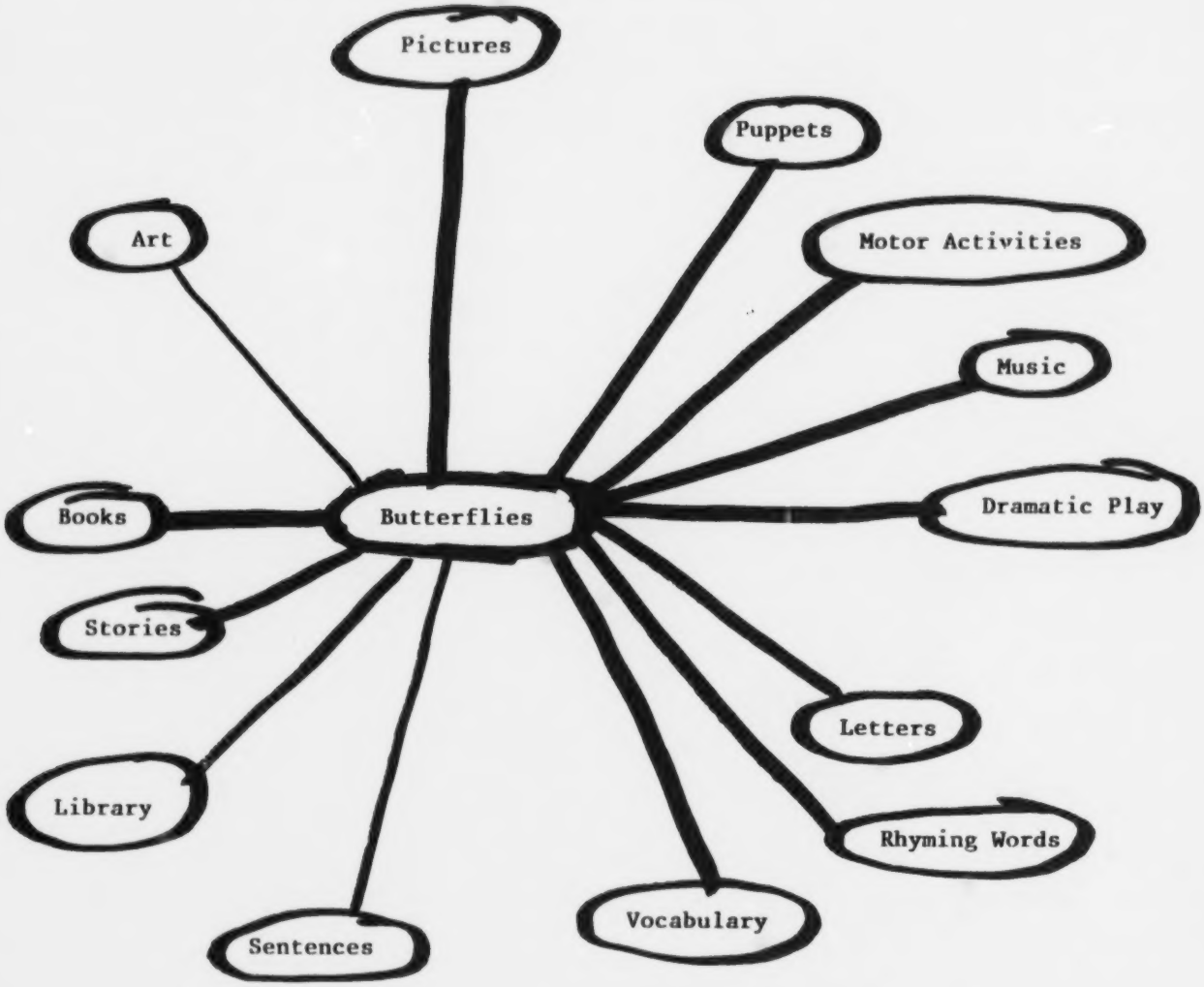
- Identify rhyming words.

- Reinforce auditory sound of the letter B.

- Make butterflies by using the plastic holders from a six pack of soft drinks and tying together in the center with a black pipe cleaner. The plastic can be colored with permanent felt pens.

- Read The Very Hungery Caterpollar and other books about butterflies.

- Construct a "plastic bag book." Illustrate the rhyme and put pages into plastic freezer bags. Staple and tape side of the bags together. Place in the library center.



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Conclusion

There are a variety of fingerplays for selection. Using this delightful and facinitating medium can strengthen language experiences for young children. It is important to select appropriate rhymes, make motivating materials and plan stimulating extended activities to enhance listening, speaking reading and writing.

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